



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 17, 2005  
NR05-008

## EMERGENCY RULE ESTABLISHES TRIP LIMITS FOR COMMERCIAL SHALLOW-WATER AND DEEP-WATER GROUPER FISHERIES IN THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published in the *Federal Register* (70 FR 8037, February 17, 2005) an emergency rule establishing trip limits for the commercial shallow-water grouper (black grouper, gag, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, rock hind, and red hind) and deep-water grouper (misty grouper, snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, and speckled hind) fisheries in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

This emergency rule establishes the following trip limits:

1) Beginning at 12:01 a.m., local time, March 3, 2005, a 10,000-pound trip limit for deep-water grouper and shallow-water grouper combined is in effect; 2) if on or before August 1 more than 50 percent of either the shallow-water grouper quota (8.8 million pounds) or red grouper quota (5.31 million pounds) is reached, the trip limit will be 7,500 pounds; and 3) if on or before October 1 more than 75 percent of either the shallow-water grouper quota or red grouper quota is reached, the trip limit will be 5,500 pounds.

The intended effect of this emergency rule is to moderate the rate of harvest of the available quotas, reduce the adverse social and economic effects of derby fishing, enable more effective quota monitoring, and reduce the probability of overfishing.

NMFS issues this emergency rule, effective for not more than 180 days, as authorized by section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The emergency rule may be extended for an additional 180 days, provided the public has had an opportunity to comment on the emergency rule and provided the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) is actively preparing proposed regulations to address the emergency on a permanent basis. Public comments on this emergency rule are invited and will be considered in determining whether to extend this emergency rule. The Council is preparing a regulatory amendment under the fishery management plan framework procedure to address, on a permanent basis, trip limits for the commercial grouper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico that are the

subject of this rule. Comments on this emergency rule must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on March 21, 2005.

**Addresses:** You may submit comments on this emergency rule by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: [0648-AS97.Emergency@noaa.gov](mailto:0648-AS97.Emergency@noaa.gov). Include in the subject line the following document identifier: 0648-AS97
- Federal Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail: Phil Steele, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702.
- Fax: 727-0570-5583, Attention: Phil Steele

Copies of the documents supporting this emergency rule may be obtained from the NMFS Southeast Regional Office at the above address.

**For Further Information Contact:** Phil Steele, 727-570-5305; fax: 727-570-5583; e-mail: [Phil.Steele@noaa.gov](mailto:Phil.Steele@noaa.gov).

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NMFS is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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NMFS is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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NR05-008